

Ballentine House, originally "Dewsville"
On the south side of Main Street between
Comte de Grasse and Nelson Streets
Yorktown
York County
Virginia

HABS No. - VA-596

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100-YORK,
16-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Eastern Office, Division of Design and Construction
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia 6, Pennsylvania

BALLENTINE HOUSE, ORIGINALLY "DEWSVILLE"

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Location: On the south side of Main Street between Comte de Grasse and Nelson Streets, Yorktown, York County, Virginia

Present Owner: Mrs. John J. Ballentine, Dogue Post Office, King George County, Virginia

Present Occupant: Charles Warner, National Park Service Historian

Present Use: Residence

Brief Statement of Significance: This house has many interesting interior parts taken from a dismantled late eighteenth-century house.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: Original owners not known. It is claimed that Thomas Roderick Dew, once president of William and Mary College (in the mid-nineteenth century) was born here.
2. Date of erection: Probably late eighteenth century.
3. Notes on alterations and additions: "Dewsville" was located in the upper part of King and Queen County, Virginia, near a rural community called Newtown. About 1939, Mrs. Ballentine had the house dismantled, and moved many of the old parts to Yorktown, where they were reassembled into an essentially smaller and different form.
4. Source of information: Interview with Charles Warner, National Park Service Historian and occupant of the house.

B. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated: Mrs. John J. Ballentine, owner of house.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The original house was dismantled and reassembled here in part, and is interesting only for its surviving and reused interior parts.
2. Condition of fabric: Good

B. Technical Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: One-and-a-half stories with cellar; 19'-4" x 39'-8".
2. Foundations: Brick (reused); no water table.
3. Wall construction: Brick (reused) laid in Flemish bond using modern Portland cement and lined joints. First floor joists and timbers are from the original house.
4. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Three exterior door openings (one in front, two in rear); also an upright bulkhead entrance to cellar and kitchen. Front door is modern. Two rear doors are old and paneled. Parts of door architraves and trim are old. Front door has a transom with modern sash.
 - b. Windows and shutters: Parts of the window frames are old, including some sills, but the sash are modern. No shutters. Two small windows on second floor on northwest end, interesting because they slide into the wall, are old parts reused in this house.
5. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: Gable roof, steep pitch (approximately 14" rise for 12" run), covered with modern slate
 - b. Cornice, eaves: Wood; modern modillioned cornice of Colonial style.
 - c. Dormers: Two dormers in front and three in rear; dormer window frames are old, including sills; back bands are new as are cheek boards and sash.
6. Chimney: One large chimney on northwest end of house; all chimney construction is modern, of Colonial design, with offsets on face and sides.

C. Technical Description of Interiors:

1. Floor plans: Basically two rooms with a small alcove between and a stairway in the east corner. A small corner hall occupies the east quarter of the house. Small closets flank the fireplace with very low doors and bookcase overhead.
2. Stairways: Stairway is located in the east corner and is a "U" type with two winders. Stair is from original house and is interesting for its detailing of balusters and hand rail.

3. Flooring: Old, random-width pine flooring from the original house.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Modern plaster, except on fireplace wall on northwest end of living-room, which is paneled in wood from the original house, including cornice with dentils. Panel over fireplace includes metopes, tryglyphs, and guttae, fluted pilasters and keystones over closet doors.
5. Doorways and doors: Nearly all interior doors and trim around openings are from the original house. Doors are paneled.
6. Trim: Most of the trim is old and reused here.
7. Hardware: Much of the hardware, including H-L hinges and locks, are eighteenth century, from the original house.
8. Lighting: Modern
9. Heating: Central heating, fireplace in living-room only.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: House is situated in center of lot, back from street and surrounded by lawn and shrubbery. The front wall of the house faces north-east (Main Street).
2. Enclosures: Hedges along street.
3. Outbuildings: None.
4. Walks: Modern brick.

Prepared by Lee H. Nelson, Architect
National Park Service
May 1960